



Maryland & Virginia

Milk Producers Cooperative Association, Inc.

May 23, 2005

Bill Thomas
U.S. House of Representatives
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515-0001
Fax: (202) 225-8798

Dear Bill Thomas:

On behalf of Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative, a milk marketing cooperative representing nearly 1,500 dairy farm families from Pennsylvania to Alabama, I am writing to you in support of the Free Trade Agreement with Central America and the Dominican Republic (CAFTA-DR). Our dairy farmer members have a vested interest in seeing CAFTA-DR passed and new export markets opened to U.S. dairy products.

This agreement, much more so than any other recently passed FTA, will provide an important benefit to all dairy producers and processors, as well as to America's dairy industry as a whole. The agreement opens up new opportunities to increase U.S. dairy exports to this dairy importing area of the world. Our negotiators fought hard to gain increased access for U.S. dairy products into Central America and the Dominican Republic. We appreciate the new prospects that would be possible thanks to their hard work.

The CAFTA-DR will grant U.S. producers and processors immediate open access into these countries for whey and lactose, as well as tariff-free access for expanded amounts of cheese and skim milk powder, along with other important dairy products. We are especially pleased that ultimately all tariffs will phase out. We believe our industry can anticipate an increase in exports under this FTA that will result in benefits to the U.S. dairy industry of approximately \$100 million over the first few years of the agreement.

Trade agreements like the CAFTA-DR with dairy-importing countries comprehensively benefit America's dairy industry. An extremely competitive global market, coupled with the attractiveness of the U.S. dairy market, makes it important to seize all available opportunities that will result in positive net benefits for the U.S. dairy industry.

CAFTA-DR will provide this prospect of allowing us to better cultivate new export markets for the great dairy products produced in this country. I ask you to support this agreement in order to allow America's dairy industry to enjoy the resulting benefits.

Sincerely,

Jay Bryant
General Manager